

Message Text

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S/S:MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 098640

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, AR,MORG

SUBJECT: GENERAL OFFICER BILLET ARGENTINA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2643

FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS TO AMBASSADOR HILL

1. I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN THAT THE DOWNGRADING OF THE GENERAL OFFICER BILLET IN THE MILGRP IN BUENOS AIRES MAY BE PERCEIVED BY SOME IN THE GOA AS AN INDICATION OF DIMINISHED U.S. INTEREST IN ARGENTINA. THIS IS HARDLY THE OPTIMUM MOMENT TO REMOVE GENERAL SALISBURY FOR THE VARIETY OF REASONS WHICH YOU CITE.

2. I HAVE LOOKED INTO THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER, AND FOUND THERE IS NO ROOM FOR FLEXIBILITY. PUBLIC LAW 94-11 REQUIRES THAT NUMBER OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO MILITARY MISSIONS ABROAD BE REDUCED TO MAXIMUM OF 20 BY
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MAY 1, 1975. AS YOU ARE PROBABLY AWARE, RECENTLY CONCLUDED

WORLD-WIDE MAAG STUDY RECOMMENDED THAT ARGENTINE MILGRP
BILLET BE DOWNGRADED TO AN 06. JOINT CHIEFS ALSO
RECOMMENDED DOWNGRADING TO 06 LEVEL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILL IMMINENTLY MAKE HIS FINAL

DECISION TO ACCEPT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CASE OF
ARGENTINA. UNDER PROVISIONS OF PL 94-11, POSITION DOWN-
GRADING MUST TAKE PLACE NO LATER THAN MAY 1, 1975. FOR
THIS REASON, THIS ACTION CANNOT BE POSTPONED UNTIL GENERAL
SALISBURY'S NORMAL TRANSFER DATE SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 1976.

3. DESPITE THE INVIDIOUS COMPARISON SOME GOA OFFICIALS
MAY DRAW WITH BRAZIL, WHERE 3 U.S. FLAG OFFICERS REMAIN,
I AM CERTAIN YOU ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE BRAZIL CASE IS
NOT ANALAGOUS TO THE ARGENTINE SITUATION. THE THREE U.S.
GENERAL OFFICERS IN BRAZIL ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST ASSIGNED
TO THE JOINT BRAZILIAN-U.S. MILITARY COMMISSION (JBUSMC)
AND PERFORM ONLY AS AN ANCILLARY FUNCTION IN A MILGP CAP-
ACITY. INDEED, A PENDING RECOMMENDATION TO THE SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE, IF APPROVED, WILL COMPLETELY TERMINATE ANY
MILGP FUNCTIONS NOW ASSIGNED TO TWO OF THE THREE GENERAL
OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE JBUSMC.

4. IN PRESENTING THIS MATTER TO THE GOA YOU SHOULD
STRESS THAT THIS STEP IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A WORLD-WIDE
MEASURE CALLED FOR UNDER U.S. LAW AND, AS SUCH, DOES NOT
REFLECT ANY LESSENING OF OUR INTEREST IN OR SUPPORT OF THE
ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES. KISSINGER

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